

REMARKS

Status of this application

In the Office Action mailed on May 7, 2004, the Examiner rejected claims 1-2 and 11-12 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Weisshaar et al. Patent 6,580,916 (hereinafter "Weisshaar"), and rejected claims 3-5 and 13-15 as being unpatentable under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) in view of Weisshaar when considered with Hancock et al Patent 6,202,023 (hereinafter "Hancock").

The rejection based on Weisshaar

Applicants' invention as claimed employs a user-manipulated control (embodied in the user control 140 seen in Fig. 1) which permits the user to specify and store user-defined geographic regions by selecting a combination of system-defined regions from a visual display. The specification of the new user-defined region is stored in a second set of relational database tables and is transferred to the tables describing objects to associate the new user defined region with one of those objects.

Weisshaar describes a mechanism for connecting clients (users) to services, but does not describe any mechanism for, or any need for, associating user-defined geographic regions with objects.

Claim 1 sets forth, inter alia:

"means for storing reference data in a second set of one or more relational tables describing a plurality of system defined regions, said reference data including the specification of the geographic location of each given one of said system defined regions and a human interpretable description of each given one of said regions,"

Weisshaar does not disclose or suggest the use of relational tables which describe system defined regions. The cited passage at col. 10, lines 9-49 describes "system databases 333" but none of these includes the specification of the geographic location of a system defined region and a human interpretable description of each such system defined region as claimed. Likewise, the cited passage at col. 23, line 39 to col. 24, line 53 describes the use of multiple address books, but nowhere is it suggested that these address books contain the specification of the geographic location of a plurality of system defined regions.

Claim 1 further defines in detail the functions performed by a user-manipulated control:

"employing a user-manipulated control for performing the substeps of:

visually displaying to a user said human interpretable description for said system defined regions,
accepting from said user an identification of a plurality of system defined regions, and
generating the specification of a new user defined region consisting of the combination of said plurality of system defined regions, and
storing reference data describing said new user defined region in said second set of tables,"

The Examiner cites col. 16, lines 40-61 which describes the manner in which the system monitors changes in the attributes of services to see if those changes create a match with any outstanding service request, but the teaching of this passage has nothing to do with creating a user-defined region definition by manipulating a control to select a combination of system defined regions. The Examiner further cites col. 18, lines 3-64 which describe how a client application locates a desired service meeting defined criteria. Again, this passage does not disclose or suggest a user-manipulated control which permits a user to define a region by specifying a combination of visually displayed system defined regions.

The Examiner cites col. 27, line 54 to col. 28, line 67 which lists a set of classes and interfaces implemented in the Weisshaar system, none of which defines or uses system defined regions or selectively combines such definitions to create user defined regions as claimed.

Claim 1 concludes by reciting:

"means responsive to said control for transferring selected items of said reference data to said means for storing geographic location data associated with one of said objects."

The Examiner cites col. 20, lines 19-48, which describes the manner in which remote services can be discovered and connected in the Weisshaar system. Nowhere in that passage is it suggested that reference data which is created by combining system defined region data is then stored as geographic location data for an object. The Examiner further cites col. 29, line 8 to col. 30, line 28 which provides an overview of the method for matching service requests to available services shown in the flowcharts of Figs. 11 and 12, but this passage also does not describe transferring user defined reference data created by combining system defined region data as the geographic location data stored for an object.

It is accordingly submitted that Weisshaar plainly fails to anticipate claim 1 and that the rejection under Section 102 should accordingly be withdrawn.

Method claim 11 is similar in scope to claim 1 (for present purposes) and was rejected for the same reasons. Like claim 1, claim 11 is believed to be allowable for the reasons presented above.

Reconsideration of the rejection of claims 2 and 12 based on the teaching at col. 29, line 8 to col. 30, line 28 is also requested. Claim 2 states that "*said user-manipulated control further comprises means for identifying a selected one of said regions described in said second set of tables and for transferring data specifying the geographic location of said selected one of said regions to said first set of tables to specify the geographic location of a specified one of said objects.*" As noted above, col. 29, line 8 to col. 30, line 28 generally describes Weisshaar's method for matching service requests to available services shown in the flowcharts of Figs. 11 and 12 but does not describe transferring geographic region data from one set of tables to another as claimed.

Reconsideration of the rejection of claims 1-2 and 11-12 based on Weisshaar is accordingly requested.

The Obviousness Rejection

Claims 3-5 and 13-15 were rejected as being unpatentable under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) in view of Weisshaar when considered with Hancock.

For the reasons presented above, Weisshaar does not disclose the subject matter of independent claims 1 and 11, and nothing in Hancock cures that deficiency. Hancock describes a system which includes a database for creating and updating objects, and employs a hierarchical locational address that specifies the location of each object within a nested set of system defined regions.

The cited Hancock et al. patent does not, however, describe a user-manipulatable control that allows the user to specify user defined regions by selecting and combining a plurality of user defined regions. Hancock describes "database queries" but does not describe separate sets of tables, one of which stores geographically located objects (as in applicants tables 120 seen in Fig. 1), and another (seen at 142 in applicant's Fig. 1) which stores the description of system defined and user defined regions created using the user manipulated control.

It is submitted that there is nothing in the Weisshaar patent that would suggest the need for a hierarchical addressing mechanism of the type described by Hancock. And there is nothing in Weisshaar that teaches a user-manipulatable control which might somehow used with the Hancock hierarchical data. In short, neither reference discloses anything like the invention as claimed, and accordingly combining their teachings would not yield the subject matter claimed.

Reconsideration of the rejection of the dependent claims based on the combination of Weisshaar and Hancock is also requested.

Conclusion

Reconsideration and allowance of claims 1-5 and 11-25 is requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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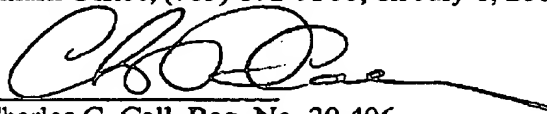
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